

Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance

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May 15, 2001

Matt St. John
NCRWQCB
5550 Skylane Blvd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Mr. St. John:

Yesterday I mailed you, by U.S. Express Mail, 44 documents and a videotape pertaining to the 303(d) listing or re-listing of south coast Mendocino creeks (Greenwood Creek, Elk Creek, Alder Creek, Mallo Pass Creek, Brush Creek, Schooner Gulch) and north coast Mendocino creeks (Cottaneva Creek, Hardy Creek, Juan Creek, Howard Creek, DeHaven Creek and Wages Creek).

Please see the enclosed "Documents attached to Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance letter of 5/14/01" (3 pages) which provides a numbered list of the 45 items attached to our letter of 5/14/01, designated as Attachments 1-45, and the full title and number of pages of each item. This list also includes, on page 3, a list of 6 "Documents incorporated by reference."

My attachment list of today's letter, "Additional documents, attached to Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance letter of 5/15/01" (1 page) includes ten additional items, designated Attachments a-j. I am forced to send you these items via fax, due to the deadline, and will send originals via snail mail. These include a photograph of the mud in the Greenwood Creek estuary after a rainstorm in winter 1998 (Attachment b).

Also attached to this letter, a report that narrates the information that we have provided in support of the 303(d) listing of these watercourses (RCWA Report, 14 pages).

Sincerely,

Mary Pjerrou
President, Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance
and on behalf of the Greenwood Watershed Association

Enc.

Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance Report:
Impaired Mendocino Coast Streams that Require 303(d) Listing
May 15, 2001

Introduction

This report includes a summary of information on fish and water quality issues in support of 303(d) listing for a series of small watersheds on the south Mendocino Coast that drain independently into the Pacific Ocean, including Greenwood Creek, Elk Creek, Alder Creek, Mallo Pass Creek, Brush Creek, Schooner Gulch, and, on the north Mendocino coast, Cottaneva Creek, Hardy Creek, Juan Creek, Howard Creek, DeHaven Creek and Wages Creek.

A summary of information about these impaired creeks is provided in "South Mendocino Coast Creeks," Tables 1, 2 and 3, "Cottaneva et al," Tables 1, 2 and 3, "South Mendocino Coast Creeks Temperature data," "Cottaneva Creek Temperature data," and in the lists of Timber Harvest Plans for each creek. These summary tables are, for the most part, based on Louisiana Pacific's Sustained Yield Plan for Coastal Mendocino (SYP 95-003), WWSAA's 84, 87, 89, 91, 94, and 47, and associated Fish Distribution, Stream Temperature and Wildlife Habitat Relationship studies, and on Timber Harvest Plan filings.

L-P SYP and fish statistics provide a base line of information about these and other Mendocino coast watersheds. For instance, L-P Fish Distribution surveys found coho salmon in only 8 out of 27 watersheds studied. (Elk Creek and Cottaneva Creek are among the eight.) Overall, the coho was absent in 90% of the streams in the L-P ownership. L-P temperature studies show high, and often lethal, temperatures in many coastal streams including those at issue here.

L-P tree size statistics (in the Wildlife Habitat Relationship studies) reveal a critical lack of big trees. 97% of the average timber stands in the ownership were in 1 to 21 inch diameter trees (with the bulk of that—50%--in 11 to 16 inch diameter trees). Only 3% contained the bigger trees needed by wildlife and fisheries. Of the small coastal watersheds that are the subject of this report, Cottaneva Creek, Greenwood Creek, Elk Creek, Alder Creek and Brush Creek contain relatively high percentages of the last 3% of big trees in the ownership. Not surprisingly, these are the creeks are being subjected to intense new logging. (See THP tables.)

As these documents show, logging is one of the major impacts on these coastal creeks. In an area such as Elk Creek, logging is virtually the only impact. There are almost no other land uses in Elk Creek, and 77% of the watershed is owned by one industrial logger (MRC, successor to Louisiana Pacific). Cottaneva Creek is 75% owned by one industrial timber landowner (MRC). Greenwood Creek, on the other hand, is 58% owned by the industrial logger, and has about 50 other landowners (vineyards, orchards, residences, small timber land owners, and small portions of public and land trust ownership).

In short, assessment of the beneficial uses of water in these creeks is mostly an assessment of the impacts of industrial logging, and of the rules and review practices of the CA Dept. of Forestry, the lead agency in the approval of all logging plans.

Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance members closely monitor timber management activities and other events in several of the South Coast creeks, particularly Greenwood Creek and Elk Creek. This report therefore includes more detail, examples and supplementary documents for the South Coast creeks (see below). Cottaneva Creek (on the north coast) has the distinction of being one of only 8 (out of 27) watersheds where Louisiana Pacific found coho salmon in L-P's 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys. As with several of the south coast creeks, Cottaneva Creek is therefore extremely important to the survival of this species.

The Greenwood/Elk community has been active for more than ten years seeking better protection for the beneficial uses of water in Greenwood Creek and Elk Creek, an effort that has included six public interest lawsuits, a three year fish habitat and water quality restoration project funded by five federal and state agencies and private

donations, and numerous public comment letters from the Elk County Water District and the Greenwood Watershed Association on Timber Harvest Plan filings and other management documents.

The Greenwood/Elk community restoration project produced the "Greenwood Creek Watershed Project 1996 Road Survey," which includes detailed spreadsheets on over 600 sites of erosion in the smaller landowners' rural road systems, identified in surveys conducted according to Hagans & Weaver protocols, overseen by Dr. Fred Euphrat of Forest, Soil & Water. In 1997-98, the project implemented road maintenance, stream crossing repair (including installation of a flatcar bridge), and stream bank bioengineering work at high priority sites. The project also produced a broadcast-quality video on its restoration work, entitled "Roads & Fish."

The "Greenwood Creek Watershed Project 1996 Road Survey"—which was conducted on small landowners' roads—contains the kind of information that one would expect to find in an industrial logging plan submission—that is, cumulative road impact information. Former owner Louisiana Pacific would not permit project road surveyors on its roads, and current owner MRC has failed to conduct, or has failed to disclose, any road surveys. Past and current THPs contain no cumulative road impact information, little or no information on future logging plans, and contain only generalized and conclusory watershed assessment.

In May 2000, a watershed group lawsuit resulted in a broad ruling against several Mendocino Redwood Company Timber Harvest Plans, in which the judge found that CDF and MRC had illegally failed to assess the incremental, or cumulative, impacts of multiple logging plans over time, and in particular mentioned the company's failure to provide a long term forest management plan for the lawsuit watersheds (Greenwood Creek, Elk Creek and the Albion River).

Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC), the major landowner of the watersheds at issue in this report, abandoned the public process of Sustained Yield planning in January 2000. Its various management documents (attached by reference to its web sites) fail to contain any watershed assessment or planning information for the creeks in question, or for other coastal watersheds.

Regardless of this lack of long term assessment and planning information, CDF has approved numerous new logging plans in these watersheds over the last several years, often including clearcutting and clearcutting-type methods and extensive road construction, on top of heavy impacts from over 100 years of past logging. (See THP tables.)

CDF is "flying blind" when it comes to assessing the cumulative effects of intense new logging activity in these watersheds. Numerous new logging plans have been approved with no long term watershed management plan, and, in addition, no recent fish surveys, no water quality monitoring, no cumulative road impact data, and no tools or measurements of any kind to assess the cumulative impacts to the beneficial uses of water. CDF has been guilty of approving plans that have a critical lack of information, and also of approving plans that contain false information, as explained below.

In Greenwood Creek, CDF has approved (or is in the process of approving) 13 new logging plans (much of it clearcutting) for the major industrial landowner, in the last two years alone, despite strong evidence of impacts to the Elk town water supply and to the salmonid fishery, and despite the pleas of the Elk County Water District for water quality monitoring and standards. These logging plans include an estimated 13 miles of new road construction, and include operations in many areas of "high" and "extreme" Erosion Hazard. (See Mendocino Redwood Company THPs: Greenwood Creek as of 5/01." Attachment no. 5.)

THP 1-00-357 MEN in Greenwood Creek is an example of the lack of information and false information in Timber Harvest Plans approved by CDF. This THP intends to clearcut 77 acres adjacent to one of the community's major fish habitat and water quality restoration sites, and intends to use the flatcar bridge installed by the restoration project, and the roads where the community installed 3 miles of waterbars, for logging operations. The cumulative impacts assessment for THP 357 fails to mention the extensive restoration work in the area, and furthermore alleges that there are no coho salmon in Greenwood Creek, and marshals "Seven Proofs" in support of this contention. The THP, however, fails to cite several strong sources that are positive for coho salmon, including former owner Louisiana Pacific's Sustained Yield Plan WWAA 84-Greenwood Creek, which states the following:

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"...coho salmon populations are present within Upper and Lower Greenwood Creek planning watersheds." (WWAA 84, p. 8, 40).

In its "Official Response" to public comment for THP 357, CDF asserts that the SYP writers did not mean Greenwood Creek when they said "Greenwood Creek," but meant another area entirely, dubbed "Cuffey's Point" -- an area behind the town of Elk, unconnected to Greenwood Creek, which drains off a cattle ranch and across Highway One to a 140 foot cliff over the ocean.

CDF further asserts, in this O.R., that there are no steelhead in the South Fork of Greenwood Creek (the THP and restoration project bridge site), while failing to mention Louisiana Pacific Fish Distribution survey data for Greenwood Creek showing that L-P found 10 to 40 steelhead in the South Fork. (See attachments nos. 31-38 -- photo and maps showing Greenwood Creek and "Cuffey's Point," the text of the SYP, CDF's "Official Response" on THP 357, and the L-P fish data sheet.)

CDF's absurd error of placing coho salmon in an area with a 140 foot drop-off (in order to avoid having them in Greenwood Creek) is an extreme example of the information problem in the cumulative impacts assessments for these THPs--that is, utterly false information. Another example can be found in THP 1-97-445 MEN, in Elk Creek, where CDF permitted the South Fork of Elk Creek to be classified as a Class II stream, despite evidence that CDF had in hand (the L-P surveys) of a rare find of coho salmon in the South Fork of Elk Creek in 1995.

The "<10" coho salmon that L-P found in the south fork of Elk Creek in 1995 are apparently now gone. THP 1-00-363 MEN in Elk Creek contains evidence that no coho salmon were found in this creek in the year 2000. (THP p. 98) THP 363, however, fails to "connect the dots"--it doesn't include the L-P fish survey that found coho salmon in 1995.

CDF has approved a total of 17 logging plans for the major industrial landowner in Elk Creek over the last few years. Most of it is clearcutting. THP 363 alone contains seven miles of new road construction. Another landowner, Roger Burch, logged over 400 acres in THP 1-98-266 MEN, in lower Elk Creek, in 1998--a plan that contained numerous road and stream erosion problems and included logging in the stream zones.

Environmental case law describes cumulative impacts assessment as a means of "ringing the alarm bell" when the impacts of multiple management projects over time begin to damage the natural resources of an area. The time for "ringing the alarm bell" in these small coastal watersheds has long since past--due to the cumulative neglect of our regulatory agencies, and the on-going greed for lumber. It is now time for triage. The salmonid fisheries and water quality in these streams are obviously in critical condition, and in need of the emergency measure of 303(d) listing.

The Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance proposes 303(d) listing for all south coast and north coast creeks that drain into the Pacific independently of the major rivers, and that contain coho salmon/steelhead habitat and other beneficial uses of water. Current and historical evidence indicates that these small independent drainages are very important coho fisheries that have obviously been impaired by human activity, and where, in fact, once abundant coho salmon fisheries are now dying out, due to sediment and temperature impacts, poor enforcement of the CA Forest Practice Rules, and other influences. These creeks have been neglected by the 303(d) process. That neglect must end.

SOUTH MENDOCINO COAST: An extinction in progress

Greenwood Creek, Elk Creek, Alder Creek, Mallo Pass Creek, Brush Creek, Schooner Gulch

There are a number of small, discreet, Mendocino coast watersheds south of the Navarro River, owned primarily by corporate timber interests, that once had abundant coho salmon and steelhead but where the meager available survey data shows critically low and still declining numbers, and where, indeed, there is evidence that extinction of the Coho salmon is imminent.

This report includes six of these Mendocino coastal creeks that drain independently into the Pacific Ocean south of the Navarro River. **Greenwood Creek, Elk Creek, Alder Creek and Mallo Pass Creek** are primarily owned and

are being logged by the Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC), which bought out Louisiana Pacific in July 1998. MRC owns substantial portions of the above watersheds, and small portions of **Brush Creek** and **Schooner Gulch**. Brush Creek is located just south of Alder Creek. Schooner Gulch is located south of Brush Creek and west of the Garcia River.

The coho salmon, as one of the most sensitive species in coastal watersheds, can be compared to the "canary in the coal mine." Here is the long and the short of it, as to the presence of coho salmon in the above mentioned creeks.

Greenwood Creek: present in abundance in the 1920's-1930s; seen by a local fisherman in 1975; found to be present in unpublished L-P surveys in 1995; absent, however, in L-P's published surveys in 1994-96; unequivocal statement of coho presence in L-P's SYP in both the "upper and lower" Greenwood Creek areas; current MRC foresters now claiming that the coho salmon "is not known to be present"; CDF supporting these foresters and saying that the SYP writers didn't mean "Greenwood Creek," they meant "Cuffey's Point" (an area near town, unrelated to Greenwood Creek, with a 140 foot drop off into the ocean).

Elk Creek: present in abundance in the 1920s-1930s; local folks remember grandparents fishing for coho in the south fork; present in upper Elk Creek in 1979, absent by 1995; present in the south fork of Elk Creek ("<10" fish) in published L-P surveys in 1994-96; absent in MRC surveys, five years later, in the year 2000.

Alder Creek: No comment in SYP about coho, but 39.6 miles of class I streams; fairly good steelhead; locals recall steelhead jumping barrier a few miles up.

Mallo Pass Creek: SYP says coho salmon currently present; L-P 1994-96 published surveys found no coho; some steelhead.

Brush Creek: SYP says historical coho, but none seen since 1976. No survey data.

Schooner Gulch: SYP says coho in some streams; L-P 1994-96 published surveys found no coho; some steelhead.

What we are seeing here is a tragic tale of extirpation, happening before our very eyes—and in violation of numerous of our laws, including the Clean Water Act. For several of the impacts that are driving this species to extinction are water quality impacts including the muddying and poisoning of the streams with sediment and toxic herbicides, and the creation of high water temperatures, another pollutant, caused by the human activity of overlogging.

This report will reference WWAA 84-Greenwood Creek, WWAA 87-Elk Creek, WWAA 89-Alder Creek (and Mallo Pass Creek), WWAA 91-Brush Creek and WWAA 94-Schooner Gulch, in *Louisiana Pacific's Sustained Yield Plan for Coastal Mendocino (SYP 95-003, March 11, 1997)*. Although L-P's SYP was never approved by the California Department of Forestry—and although the Mendocino Redwood Company abandoned the SYP process in January 2000—L-P's SYP is still a source of information for the former L-P ownership, and is one of the few sources available.

In its "Official Response" to public comment for THP 1-00-357 MEN, in Greenwood Creek, CDF states that, "Questions related to the [L-P] SYP are not addressed herein, as intricacies of a withdrawn document do not have direct bearing on the review of or operations on this THP." (O.R., p. 5). We disagree. In the absence of an SYP by the current owner, L-P's SYP becomes all the more important as a source of information—for assessment of the cumulative impacts of an individual THP, as for a 303(c) listing. Even if there *were* a comparable MRC management document—which there is not—the former owner's SYP would be highly relevant to any assessment of these forest lands. (In any case, CDF violates its own premise, in the very same O.R., by changing the SYP writers' meaning for the words "Greenwood Creek" to "Cuffey's Point"—in order to remove the SYP coho from Greenwood Creek, where MRC wants to log. O.R., p. 18. Attachment. 35).

Current owner MRC provides no watershed assessment and planning information in its general management documents. The two MRC documents that are available to the public are: 1) MRC's "Option A" which was approved by CDF in connection with a logging plan in Rockport (THP 1-99-505) in early 2000. The "Option A" received no public notice. A copy is apparently available at CDF, and possibly at MRC's web site (www.mrc.com),

and portions of it are included in some individual THPs. And 2) MRC's unofficial "Management Plan, Policies and Targets August 2000," a document that has not undergone any official public review or approval. (See attachments 42, 43, and 39.)

Neither of the above documents contain any information about the watersheds in our current report on these coastal streams. (The only reference is in the MRC "Management Plan" as to 1999 cutting levels – but it groups all south coast creeks together into one "South Coast Inventory Block"). MRC has failed to conduct, or has failed to disclose, fish surveys or other water quality studies since it took ownership of L-P lands in July 1998.¹ The "Public Summaries of MRC Certification" that were recently published by Scientific Certification Systems and by Smartwood also contain no watershed assessment and planning information, and no information on fisheries or water quality. (Attachment 40 and 41.)

The portions of the L-P SYP that are relevant to fisheries are the first ten pages of each WWA. The tables accompanying this report (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3) that are identified by the WWA number and drainage name, summarize the information in the text of the SYP WWA sections. The Tables also include information from other sources, for instance, L-P's 1994-96 Fish Distribution and Temperature studies, and information from some non-L-P sources.

Another reference used in this report is the NMFS/Tiburon fish survey report: *Historical and Current Presence/Absence of Coho Salmon (Oncorhynchus Kisutch) in the Central California Coast ESU, April 1999, by Peter B. Adams et al, Administrative Report SC 9902*, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Santa Cruz, Tiburon Lab, National Marine Fisheries Service (3150 Paradise Drive, Tiburon, CA 94920), primarily ref #42 unpublished L-P data, and #10 historical surveys. (Attachment no. 24.)

This report also contains information from CDF files of THPs, compiled by us into THP tables which provide THP number, acreage, silviculture methods and some notes, and, in the case of Greenwood Creek, a breakdown of silviculture by acreage, an estimate of new road construction, notations of landslide, road and stream crossing problems and EHR, and more extensive notes.

The three tables prepared by Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance for each south coast WWA contain the following: 1. Summary of the SYP information having to do with fisheries and water quality impacts (for instance, fish distribution, stream temps, road density, miles of Class I streams, no. of stream crossings, high/chronic shallow landslide potential, etc.), and including an extrapolation of sediment yield, using an SYP formula (table 3), and some other basic watershed information (f.i., the results of our compilation of tree size data from the SYP Wildlife Habitat Relationship (WHR) data for the current period). 2. Other information available to RCWA (f.i., a few items on coho absence/presence from the NMFS/Tiburon Lab fish survey report, and historical notes). 3. Summary of current logging (with attached tables of current THPs). (Attachments 1-15.)

We have also included a detailed summary of the L-P 1994-96 Stream Temperature monitoring results for each WWA (see attached tables of stream temperature data). (Attachments 4 and 13.)

This report also includes our compilation of the tree size data from the SYP's Wildlife Habitat Relationship studies for each watershed. (See Table 1: Tree Farming on the Mendocino Coast, and Table 2: Liquidation Logging on the Mendocino Coast.) This data reveals that, as of about 1997, 97% of the average timber stands in this ownership were in 1 to 21 inch diameter trees (with the bulk of that, about 50%, in 11 to 16 inch diameter trees), and only 3% contained the bigger trees (24 inch diameter or greater) needed by wildlife and fisheries. (Attachments 15, 16.)

Of L-P's 28 coastal watersheds, only 14 contained substantial percentages (in average timber stands) of that last 3% of big trees. All six south coast watersheds are among those 14 watersheds. Percentage of the last 3% of big trees:

¹ In THP 1-00-363, in Elk Creek, MRC merely includes evidence of a fish survey—a list of species found. No survey data, methods or report is included. CDF reveals in the O.R. (after plan approval) for THP 1-00-357 that MRC conducted fish surveys in Greenwood Creek in 2000, but fails to disclose the surveys and only mentions one finding—that no coho were found. CDF thus prevents public scrutiny of the surveys and any comparison of the current data on steelhead with past L-P steelhead data.

Greenwood Creek, 5.5%, Elk Creek, 8.4%, Alder Creek (and Mallo Pass Creek), 8.3%, Brush Creek, 10%, Schooner Gulch, 3%. These are some of the highest percentages of the few remaining big trees in the ownership.

It is no great puzzle why these watersheds—especially Greenwood, Elk, and Alder Creeks—are currently getting hammered one last time, even with the last coho salmon in these creeks at grave risk, and, in the case of Greenwood Creek, a public water supply at risk. The enclosed Timber Harvest Plan tables for these creeks reveal that current owner MRC, over a three year period, is entering about 20% of its ownership in Greenwood, Elk and Alder Creeks. At this rate, they will enter about 65% of these forests over a ten year period. By comparison, about 40% of Greenwood Creek was entered and logged during the height of the liquidation logging decade of 1980-1990.

The intensity of MRC logging is clearly keyed to the locations of the last big trees. The most dramatic example is this "high-grading" on an ownership level is the Albion River (not represented here), which contains the highest percent of big trees (16%) in the ownership. In 1999, MRC took over 20% of its annual cut out of the Albion River, a watershed that comprises only 7% of the ownership overall. The cutting level for the south coast watersheds cannot be determined, since MRC lumps all these small watersheds together as the "South Coast Inventory Block" in its management documents (giving no specifics). (Attachment 39.) However, the THP records reveal intensive logging of the south coast creeks by MRC. (Attachment 5-8, 14.)

The two south coast watersheds that are being hammered the most are Elk Creek, which contained the only coho salmon recorded in the published L-P 1994-96 fish surveys in a region of 150 square miles (Attachment 17), and Greenwood Creek, which supplies water to the town of Elk, and where L-P recorded another rare instance of coho salmon in 1995 in unpublished studies (ref. #42 in the NMFS/Tiburon lab fish survey report). (Attachment 24.)

None of these smaller Mendocino coast watersheds has been given 303(d) protection, a decision that clearly had more to do with timber industry influence on the process than it did with scientific evidence. At a hearing of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, in December 1997, at which the local public water district and local watershed group petitioned for the re-listing of Greenwood Creek (a petition that L-P opposed), the NCRWQC Board denied the petition, and one Board member stated, "We have to let them log *somewhere!*"

Greenwood Creek appeared on the original 303(d) list of sediment-impaired watersheds prepared by NCRWQC staff, and was later removed from that list. The reason given at that time was that it was "too small" for consideration—only the major rivers would be listed.

History: the once abundant coho salmon

Although these watersheds have a few big trees left (of the major industrial timber ownership's meager portion of 3% of big trees), they have been repeatedly hammered over the last few decades, on top of extremely heavy historical logging back to the 1900s and before. The town of Greenwood (also known as Elk) was once a booming timber town, with a lumber mill on the beach and schooners from San Francisco loading up with high quality old growth timber off Cuffey's Cove and the Greenwood Pier. The forests around Elk helped to rebuild San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The hammering of these watersheds continued through the last century, with particularly devastating logging by Louisiana Pacific in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The fact that there are any big trees left—even a meager 3%—is likely attributable to the extreme steepness and difficult terrain of these geologically young watersheds.

According to CDF statistics, Mendocino coast watersheds (including the L-P/MRC ownership) contained an average of 60,000 board feet of timber per acre in 1973 (beginning of the Forest Practice Act.) MRC's "Option A" (year 2000) claims an average of 10,000 bf/ac. It is likely less than that (even the Forest Stewardship Council "certification" groups questioned the reliability of MRC's inventory data). But even at 10,000 bf/ac, the decline is obvious and dramatic, and the decline continues in the current MRC program of logging 40.3 million bf/ac per year in these very depleted and damaged forests.

The loss of the timber base is the harbinger of other losses. This final timber liquidation that is now occurring will likely mean the loss of the Coho salmon for all time. Another species that is likely to be extirpated in the near future is the marbled murrelet. (Of the four Marbled Murrelet detection sites left in Mendocino County, one is in Alder

Creek, an actual nest; the other shows up, ghostlike, transient, in various surveys in Greenwood Creek, but has never been located.)

Following is a description of the once-abundant Coho fishery in one of these smaller drainages, Elk Creek. The time period is 1920-30s:

"Two or three times each winter several of the men would take a lumber wagon at night after work, drive to the mouth of Elk Creek where, with about two sweeps with a large seine, the wagon would be filled with silver side [Coho] salmon. A year's supply of salted, smoked and canned salmon for the family was involved."

--(Reminiscences of a Town with Two Names: Greenwood Known Also As Elk," by Walter Matson, Greenwood Civic Club, 1980, p. 32)

Matson further describes Coho salmon "ganging up" in the Greenwood Creek estuary, and locals fishing for steelhead in Alder Creek and watching fish successfully jump a waterfall several miles into the Alder Creek watershed. (See attachment no. 27, "Reminiscences...".)

Louisiana Pacific's "Sustained Yield Plan for Coastal Mendocino" (SYP 95-003) states the following about Coho salmon presence in south coast creeks: **Greenwood Creek** – coho present in upper and lower areas. **Elk Creek** – coho present in the upper and lower areas. **Alder Creek** – no comment on Coho. **Mallo Pass Creek** – coho currently present. **Brush Creek** – coho historically present but not seen since 1976. **Schooner Gulch** – coho present in some streams. (SYP 95-003, WWAA 84-Greenwood Creek, 87-Elk Creek, 89-Alder Creek, 89-Mallo Pass Creek, 91-Brush Creek, 94-Schooner Gulch. The coho information is generally on or near p. 8 and repeated on or near p. 40)

The L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys, however, record the following, for Coho salmon in these same creeks: **Greenwood Creek:** 0. **Elk Creek:** <10. **Alder Creek:** 0. **Mallo Pass Creek:** 0. **Brush Creek:** no survey data. **Schooner Gulch:** 0.

This contradiction between the SYP and the same company's fish distribution surveys is typical of the information situation regarding Coho salmon on the south coast. Information is hard to find, fragmentary, incomplete, often contradictory, and includes little or no current survey effort to determine the status of this extremely endangered fish. One thing is certain, however: This once abundant fishery is facing extinction.

The Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance had to threaten a Public Information Act lawsuit to obtain the release of the L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys—data that had been used by CDF in its approval of THP 1-97-445 MEN, but was not disclosed. At the time of the release of this fish data (fall '98), the then new owner MRC inserted a frontispiece, under the title page of the reports, stating that the surveys could not be used to determine the status of the Coho salmon. MRC's forester for THP 1-97-445 stated the same, and added that "more focused population surveys are *required* in order to determine the status of the Coho salmon." [emphasis added] (Letter of MRC's Russ Shively to CDF, 10/13/98, re: THP 1-97-445 men.) No such surveys have been forthcoming, however.

The numbers for *steelhead* in the L-P 1994-96 surveys are somewhat better: **Greenwood Creek:** from <10 to 40+ steelhead (3 yrs, 9 of 9 survey sites, with 8 samplings showing 40+ steelhead). **Elk Creek:** <10 to 40+ steelhead (3 yrs, 16 of 19 survey sites, with 7 samplings showing 40+); **Mallo Pass Creek:** <10 to 40+ steelhead (3 yrs, 2 of 2 survey sites); **Alder Creek:** <10 to 40+ steelhead (3 yrs, 10 of 16 survey sites – with decline evident). **Brush Creek:** no current data. **Schooner Gulch:** <10 up to 40 steelhead (2 yrs, 2 of 4 survey sites).

The L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys found the Coho salmon to be absent in 19 of 27 watersheds (in the entire coastal ownership). In the 8 (of 27) watersheds where any coho at all were found, the coho was absent in 66% of the streams. Overall (all 27 watersheds) the Coho was absent in 90% of the streams in the ownership.

Estimated numbers of Coho salmon in the 8 (out of 27) watersheds where Coho were recorded in 1994-96: **So. Fork Eel River** (from <10 up to 40 individuals at 19 of 48 survey sites), **Cottaneva Creek** (<10 individuals at 5 of 17 survey sites), **Noyo River** (<10 up to 40+ individuals at 18 of 55 survey sites), **Albion River** (<10 up to 40+ individuals at 19 of 34 survey sites including 4 recordings of 40+ individuals), **Navarro River** (from <10 up to 40

individuals at 16 of 96 survey sites, with coho mostly located in the north branch and main stem), **Big River** (from <10 up to 40 individuals at 11 of 58 survey sites, with coho mostly located in the north fork), **Garcia River** (<10 individuals at 1 of 18 survey sites – a south fork site), and **Elk Creek** (<10 individuals at 1 of 19 survey sites – a south fork site). Overall, in the L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys, steelhead were present in 18 of 27 watersheds (absent in 9). (Note: The L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution and Temperature studies were submitted by us as public comment on L-P/MRC's SYP, and are available in the public comment records of the SYP and several THPs.)

Although the L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys were not high quality and were not measuring population (only location), fish biologist Dr. Edmund Smith, in reviewing the L-P 1994-96 data for the ownership, stated that,

The results of even this very limited survey of 20 some basins and/or watersheds (there are various numbers stated in the report) indicate that the salmonid populations are not only stressed but may be driven to levels from which they cannot return.

--Edmund Smith, 1/21/99, to CDF re: SYP 95-003
(Attachment no. 30)

The situation of the Coho salmon on the south Mendocino coast is perhaps the most critical of all. It appears that we are losing this species right now.

Additional evidence indicates that the numbers of south coast Coho salmon are still falling. For instance, the L-P 1994-96 fish surveys recorded a find of "<10" coho salmon in Elk Creek in 1995. Recently, the current owner MRC, in its submission of THP 1-00-363 MEN, included a list of species found in Elk Creek in the year 2000. No coho salmon were found. Coho salmon numbers have, in other words, gone from "<10" fish to zero fish over the last five years. (MRC did not include survey data, methods, timing, locations or any report – just a list of species found.)

The NMFS-Tiburon Lab report includes evidence of the presence of Coho salmon in the upper Elk Creek tributaries in 1979, in Mallo Pass in 1979, and in Greenwood Creek in 1996. The Coho is absent in all three places in the L-P 1994-96 surveys. The upper Elk Creek coho declined from present to absent between 1979 and 1995.

The discrepancy between L-P's published and unpublished fish survey data for Greenwood Creek—a find of coho in 1995 in the unpublished data, in the NMFS/Tiburon Lab report (ref. #42), and no coho salmon found in the published 1994-96 survey data—is puzzling. Recently, MRC foresters have been contending that there are no coho salmon in Greenwood Creek, and have marshaled "evidence" to support this assertion, locally dubbed "The 7 Proofs of the Non-Existence of Coho salmon in Greenwood Creek." One of the "proofs" that these foresters put forward is a stream survey, 34 years ago, in which the stream surveyor records seeing steelhead but says nothing about coho, and admits (in a handwritten note found in the THP addenda pages) that the stream was "too muddy from recent rains to see too many fish." (See THP 1-00-357 MEN, p. 58, and addendum p. 84, and THPs 1-00-172 MEN and 1-00-312 MEN.)

While marshalling flimsy "evidence" such as this, these MRC foresters ignore all evidence to the contrary, including a fisherman's declaration (attachment 26, Jesse Russell), the NMFS/Tiburon Lab report (unpublished L-P surveys found coho in 1995), the historical report of coho "ganging up" in the estuary ("Reminiscences..."), and the unequivocal statement in the former owner L-P's SYP that the coho is "present in both the Upper and Lower Greenwood Creek planning watersheds" (attachment 36).

Water quality impairment of south Mendocino coast creeks

To our knowledge, there is turbidity data for only one of the south coast creeks, Greenwood Creek, which is being separately submitted by the Elk County Water District. In addition, 25% of the Greenwood Creek watershed has been surveyed for erosion sources on rural roads, and numerous such erosion sources were found (attachment 44).

For Greenwood Creek, and the other coastal creeks at issue here, L-P's SYP and fish distribution and temperature studies provide information on coho/steelhead absence/presence and distribution survey numbers, mean daily water temperature, number of days at high temperatures, percentages of stream shade, ratings for pool density and LWD.

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timber square feet of basal area per acre, tree diameters (average stands), late seral designations, road density, percentage of shallow landslide potential, percentage of land with "extreme" Erosion Hazard, miles of Class I streams, the number of stream crossings per square mile, the miles of road within 100 feet of streams, percentages of surface soil erosion hazard, number of known slides, a formula for predicting the average increase in total erosion and in sediment yield per future entries, and other items of information on the natural resources that are at risk in each watershed. Tables 1, 2, and 3, record the SYP findings for each watershed on the above item list, and other information.

In addition to this rich load of data, the Timber Harvest Plans for these watersheds provide additional items of information. For instance, THP 1-00-357 MEN contains statements about "destructive" past logging practices in Greenwood Creek (THP p. 44), and the plan submitter's intentions to "reestablish" the canopy in this damaged watershed (THP page 31) and to "minimize" sediment production in current operations (THP page 53). This THP also reveals high stream temperatures (THP page 53) and low threshold standards for fisheries and water quality. These are typical statements in THPs in these watersheds, and demonstrate, time and again, a picture of very damaged resources that are going to be further damaged, with few or no actual measurements or hard data to monitor what is occurring as the result of yet another logging plan.

As the attached THP tables (mostly for MRC logging plans) show, CDF has approved numerous new logging plans in these south coast creeks in the 1997-2000 period. The plans are characterized by clearcutting or clearcutting-type methods. MRC mis-characterizes many of its logging operations as "alternative" prescription. The words "alternative" or "variable retention" appear in the first pages of the logging plan. You have to read deep into the logging plan—sometimes beyond page 50—to discover that the Rules define their "alternative" as a clearcut. In almost every case, MRC's "alternative" is a 90% clearcut. (A typical example is THP 1-00-357 MEN, in which the words "alternative" or "variable retention" appear on p. 1 and p.5, and not until p. 33 does the word "clearcut" appear, when they are required to state honestly what the silviculture will be.)

The Forest Stewardship Council's "Public Summary of MRC Certification" states that MRC intends to phase out "even-aged" forest management (i.e. clearcutting) by the year 2050 A.D.—that is, 50 years from now. (Smartwood "Public Summary of Certification," p.5. Attachment no. 41.) These watersheds are therefore very likely to be subjected to various forms of clearcutting for another 50 years. MRC's clearcutting practices include "traditional" (100%) clearcuts, "alternative" prescription (80% to 90%) clearcuts, shelterwood removal (a 3 stage clearcut), seed tree removal (a 2-stage clearcut), and various kinds of "transition," "rehabilitation" and "group selection" clearcuts. Eighty percent of MRC's logging plans contain some form of clearcutting (as the enclosed THP tables show). In 1999, 30 out of 50 MRC logging plans contained "alternative" prescription (90%) clearcuts. (Attachment no. c.)

The silviculture is broken down by acreage in the most detailed of the THP tables, the one for recent MRC activity in Greenwood Creek (entitled "Mendocino Redwood Company THPs: Greenwood Creek as of 5/01" — 2 pages — attachment no. 5). This table shows recent logging plans by MRC in Greenwood Creek, mostly 1998-2000 plans, with a few still active, or recently operated, older plans. The total of "alternative" prescription clearcutting is 836 acres. The total of other forms of clearcutting is 843 acres. The grand total for clearcutting-type logging is 1,679 acres, or 74% of the total current and recent logging acreage (tot. logging acreage 2,264 acres).

These MRC THPs in the small south coast watersheds are also characterized by logging operations in the very steep and unstable ridges of these geologically young coastal creeks, extensive new road construction, and winter operations (in all the plans). THP 1-00-363 MEN in Elk Creek includes approximately 7 miles of new road construction in this plan alone (a duplicative road that they are going to construct within a few hundred feet of an old road, along the top of the ridge). The Greenwood Creek THP table (for recent MRC logging plans—attachment 5) provides a rough estimate of 13.75 miles of new road construction in Greenwood Creek. In a recent THP in Alder Creek, the timber operator cut two thousand feet of mistaken road (THP 1-00-125 MEN am. 4); in Elk Creek, THP 1-99-156 MEN was amended (am #3) to include heavy equipment operations in the winter period. (See below for more details.)

MRC provides no cumulative road impact information for these watersheds in its THPs. The estimate of new road construction in Greenwood Creek is therefore a guesstimate—obtained by volunteers pouring over many individual THP road maps, often of different scale, with different kinds of designations for new and existing roads, and with poor quality reproduction. MRC claims to be using better road construction practices (an improvement that L-P

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actually began several years before its exit from the redwood business). MRC utterly fails to assess the cumulative, watershed-wide impacts of the new and old road construction. Further, these "better practices" often mean logging in extremely steep and unstable areas that were not easily accessible in the past, such as in THP 1-99-188 MEN, in Greenwood Creek, where a road is constructed out on an extremely thin, crumbly spur ridge to access timber. The above-mentioned impacts from thousands of feet of duplicative or "mistaken" road, heavy equipment use in winter, and "winter ops" in all plans, belie the claim of "better practices."

Another impairment—for which there is no monitoring and almost no information—is the use of Garlon and other toxic herbicides to poison unwanted trees and brush. These THPs contain no information on the use of toxic herbicides. The Forest Stewardship Council "Public Summary of Certification" states, as a condition of "certification," that MRC will "write a statement" of its "commitment" to phase out chemical herbicides by 60% over four years time and the remaining 40% "over the long run." (SCS "Public Summary," p. 29 – attachment no. 40.) We don't know what "writing a statement" means, nor how or on what time-table this phase out will occur. We do know that MRC is using Garlon and Arsenal, but we don't know how much, where or when (MRC does not provide public notice, and there is no public accountability procedure).

Garlon is known to be toxic to juvenile salmon. According to toxics expert Dr. Marc Lappe of CETOS (Center for Ethics and Toxics), "Garlon has dramatic and disturbing sub-acute toxicity for threatened and endangered salmonid species, specifically a low-level toxicity (down to 30 ppb) on swimming ability of juvenile coho salmon." Citation: "Barron, M.G. et al, "The Pharmacokinetics and metabolism of triclopyr Ester in Coho Salmon," Aquatic Toxicology, 1990, Vol. 16, pp. 19-31.

Greenwood Creek is the only creek for which turbidity data is available, since it is regularly tested by the Elk County Water District. The turbidity during storm events literally goes "off the charts" according to ECWD data—spiking at 500 to 1000 ntu, while the CA Department of Health Services standard for public drinking water is point 5 (0.5). The ECWD is generally able to filter out the turbidity from the town drinking water—though a "Boil Water Order" had to be issued in March 1998. The fish, however, have no ability to mitigate such impacts. And the cost of making the Elk town water drinkable for humans is very high. This cost, as well as the cost of monitoring the water, falls entirely on Elk rate-payers. Flooding damage, causing a threat to the physical safety of the town wells, has cost federal FEMA money.

These small coastal watersheds have a very similar logging history, and often very similar geology. It is reasonable to assume that the turbidity of Elk Creek and the other watersheds is similar to Greenwood Creek. CDF's Brad Valentine reports considerable evidence of a high sediment load in Elk Creek, in his Pre-Harvest Inspection for THP 1-97-445 MEN.

Local residents, who have made visual observations on the coast after rainstorms, report muddy conditions in the Greenwood Creek estuary, and mud plumes in the ocean coming from Greenwood Creek and Elk Creek. A photograph of the Greenwood Creek estuary on Greenwood State Beach, taken by Michael Minds after winter storms in 1998, reveals extremely muddy water pouring through the estuary out to sea. (Attachment no. b.) By comparison with the Navarro River, which displays a huge mud plume (at least 5 miles out in the ocean) after heavy rains and which takes 4 to 5 days to clear up, Greenwood Creek's and Elk Creek's mud plumes are not quite as big, and tend to clear up in 2 to 3 days (possibly because these two watersheds are "V"-shaped with steep, confined channels that flush the sediment out more quickly, as opposed to the wide, flat Navarro River).

As to canopy cover, stream shade (for Class I's through III's), fog drip effects, and other fisheries and water quality issues pertaining to the size of trees and density of the forest, most of the big trees in these small watersheds have been removed by logging. Louisiana Pacific Wildlife Habitat (WHR) data, for instance, reveals that 90-97% of the average timber stands in six of these smaller watersheds contained trees of 1 to 21 inch diameter (with the bulk of that—about 50%—in 11 to 16 inch diameter), and only 3-10% were in trees of 24 inch diameter or greater, as of about 1996-97 (with the 10% of big trees in Brush Creek being a very small timber holding).

As a reminder, the coast redwood is capable of growing to 20+ feet in diameter. These south coast creeks are among the few places with a bit of timber left, and a few pockets of decent wildlife and fish habitat, but the overall picture is one of catastrophic depletion, serious loss of biodiversity and of soil nutrients, and various kinds of water pollution.

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The SYP gives a shade percentage for Elk Creek of only 16% in the "high" category, and relatively high percentages of "high" for the other watersheds. If the canopy is broadly conceived, however, as the forest cover for the entire ecology of the watershed, there is a very serious lack of big trees to create moist, shaded conditions for streams, as is reflected in the high stream temperatures. (Attachments 4, 13.)

Although MRC logging plans contain no information on new road construction in the watershed assessment area, nor any compiled or comparative figures, following are more details on three recent examples of excessive road construction in extremely steep and unstable areas, which will create additional future impacts on the fisheries.

- 1) One recent plan, in Elk Creek, proposed 7,000 feet of new road, 5,000 of which parallels an existing road only 200-300 feet away from the new one, with about 1,000 feet of the new road at the top of an old debris slide, directly upstream from the site of the ">10" Coho found in 1995 (THP 1-00-363 MEN);
- 2) In a recent plan in Alder Creek, the Licensed Timber Operator cut 2,000 feet of new road in the wrong place and MRC sought to amend this "mistake" into the plan with no inspection and no environmental review (THP 1-00-127 MEN am. #4); and
- 3) In a recent plan in Greenwood Creek, the plan proposes using a restoration project bridge across a Class 1 stream, and a crumbly old fire road (Sky Ranch So. Fork Road) where the community did extensive waterbarring to reduce sources of erosion, in order to move very heavy logging equipment (a cable yarder, a second flatcar bridge, and logging trucks) across the creek and up the old road. This So. Fork Road was found to be one of the highest sites of erosion in the project road surveys. (Attachment no. 44, "Sites of High Erosion," Appendix B.) The plan further proposes re-constructing the entire length of a very old ridgetop (about 6,000 feet of road) in order to log 77 acres of what the plan describes as mostly (about 70%) tanoak, in an extremely steep area directly above a fish-bearing creek. (THP 1-00-357 MEN.)

Though the public cannot compile and compare road statistics in these watersheds—since the logging company provides no information—the perils to the last remaining Coho and Steelhead populations can be imagined from the examples given. Even with "modern forest practices," and expert road builders, the cumulative impacts will likely be devastating. No-risk analysis is provided in these THPs—other than guesses and surmises, with the conclusion that there will be no cumulative impacts. As for long term watershed planning, the kinds of information that might have been provided in an SYP (and which L-P's SYP attempted to provide)—new road mileage, road erosion estimates, predicted increases in erosion and sedimentation, density of stream crossings, fish survey data, risk ratings, etc.—is non-existent (or undisclosed) for the current period.

The criticisms of the CA Forest Practice Rules, the THP review process, and CDF enforcement that have been leveled by the National Marine Fisheries Service, in its Final Rulings and other documents, by Dr. Leslie Reid and other scientists, and by other government agencies, have never been more apt as applied to the loss of the fisheries and water quality in these small coastal watersheds, and the utter neglect of beneficial uses. While major rivers in Mendocino County are now beginning to receive some attention from the 303(d) process, the beneficial uses of these smaller watersheds are in the process of being lost, and for some of the uses, such as the coho salmon fishery, the loss will be irreparable.

ELK CREEK (WWAA 87)

Elk Creek is an exemplar of this in-progress extinction of the coho salmon. The description by Walter Matson of the wagons full of "silver-side" salmon in the 1920s-1930s is in stark contrast to the survey numbers of today.

The "<10" Coho salmon reported in the L-P 1994-96 surveys in the south fork of Elk Creek were the only Coho salmon recorded in those surveys in the entire 18,000 acre Elk Creek drainage—and were also the only Coho salmon recorded in those surveys in the entire region from Greenwood Creek to Alder Creek (approximately 150 square miles).

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In the year 2000—five years and 17 logging plans later—the new owner, Mendocino Redwood Company, quietly noted the Elk Creek fish species found in a year 2000 survey (in THP 1-00-363 MEN). Coho salmon is absent from the list. THP 363 says nothing about this decline. It provides no description of survey methods, nor any study parameters or other findings regarding the year 2000 survey. The THP further fails to note the previous presence and the critically low number of Coho previously recorded in the 1994-96 surveys, although those <10 Coho were located right downstream of THP 363.

The NMFS/Tiburon Lab report indicates that there were Coho salmon in the upper watershed tributaries of Elk Creek in 1979 (Three Springs Creek, Sulphur Fork and Soda Fork). In 1995, no coho were recorded. (NMFS/Tiburon Lab report, ref. #42; and the L-P 1994-96 surveys – Attachment no. 24).

Clearly, Dr. Smith's warning is coming true in Elk Creek. Coho in the upper area in 1979. No coho recorded in that area in 1995. Coho in the south fork only, in 1995. No coho recorded in 2000 in the whole of Elk Creek.

Intense logging has been taking place during these alarming declines from presence to absence. During the 1980 to 1995 period, L-P became notorious for its "liquidation logging" practices. In 1997, when L-P announced that it was selling out, former CDF Director Richard Wilson said, "It's sad but it really should be no surprise. Everybody knew they were cutting themselves out of business." (Santa Rosa Press Democrat 10/97)

In the present period—during which the south fork Coho declined from present to absent—the Mendocino Redwood Company has had a total of 17 logging plans (so far)—all of which contain all or partial clearcutting, combined with extensive new road construction. MRC owns about 14,000 acres of this 18,000 acre coastal watershed. There is almost no other management activity in Elk Creek except logging. No dams. No human habitations. No vineyards. No grazing. No ranches.

THPs 1-00-249 MEN and 1-00-363 MEN are particularly troublesome. Together with THP 1-98-266 (Roger Burch/Redwood Empire), they represent 731 acres of current logging surrounding the one place in Elk Creek, the south fork, where Coho were found (the "<10" Coho in the L-P 1994-96 surveys). This is in addition to two other nearby MRC THPs, 1-99-156 and 1-99-161, totaling 387 acres of logging, for a grand total of 1,118 acres of *current* logging surrounding and influencing this fragile fishery.

THP 363, in addition to everything else, includes 7,000 feet of new road construction. MRC logging plans in Elk Creek typically include many violations of good forest practice, such as wintertime heavy equipment operations on dirt roads, logging in very steep and unstable areas, and excessive road construction. Roger Burch's THP 1-98-266 included logging in the stream protection zones of Class I's and II's, and numerous stream crossings in an extremely landslide-prone area—the migration path of the Coho to the south fork. MRC typically stays out of the standard width Class I and II stream zones, but logs in Class IIIs.

As is indicated in the SYP formulas for predicted increase in erosion and predicted sediment, logging roads and logging do create erosion. Erosion runs downhill from Class IIIs, to Class IIs, to Class I fish habitat—and adds to the already great sediment and other impacts that are destroying the Coho. L-P temperature readings in Elk Creek in 1994-96 reveal 81 days of highs of 15 to 16.5° C. While these are not the most lethal temperatures in Mendocino County, there are nevertheless lethal, and they are an added impact to a dying fishery.

In THP 1-97-445 MEN (south fork), CDF approved 418 acres of clearcutting, 188 acres of selection, and 7 miles of road construction directly upstream from the "<10" Coho salmon. This plan was only partially logged, and was later declared illegal by the courts on Spotted Owl issues, and on an irregular "watershed assessment area-WAA" that excluded THP 1-98-266 and other THPs. Former CDF biologist Brad Valentine had this to say about Elk Creek, in his pre-harvest inspection report for THP 1-97-445 MEN:

"All the small class II and III watercourses I observed displayed evidence of pre-Forest Practice Rules timber harvest. Woody debris loading was high and sediment storage was great...In the South Fork, excessive log and sediment loading was apparent in the section we walked between Unit 9 and 16. The flood plain here was very marshy with standing water, emergent hydrophytes, and redwood snags that had died when their roots became permanent inundated. This section of stream, which is located within the THP's channel inventory Section BtoB did not match the description in the THP. Sediment loading, which

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... would be great even in the marshy area even was evident downstream where the extent of the marsh diminished." (PHI, p. 6, 11/21/97, AR 136, Mendocino Superior Court case nos. 78423 and 81923)

This was the THP/PHI in which Valentine, and also CDFG's Troy Kelly, noted that the forester has shown them fish data in the field. Kelly notes that it was data from L-P's Fish Distribution surveys, which he thought was attached to the SYP. The fish data was not included in their reports. Later public inquiry of CDF netted zip fish data. (This was the famous "<10" Coho salmon that led eventually to the release of all of the L-P fish data—a year later—during preparation of a Public Information Act lawsuit.)

CDF suppressed the L-P fish data for Elk Creek (and did not reveal it until after THP 445 was approved). It showed that CDF had approved THP 445 with a Coho salmon stream (the south fork) classified as a Class II (non-fish bearing) stream.

That about sums up the situation in Elk Creek. Lies, lies and more lies. End result: Coho extinction.

Greenwood Creek (WWAA 84)

In Greenwood Creek, a similar struggle has occurred over basic fish information. Currently, MRC foresters are trying to "prove" that there are no Coho salmon in Greenwood Creek—largely using "neg dec" evidence, such as a 1-day stream survey in 1966 in which no Coho were observed, and anecdotal information, while ignoring and failing to cite evidence of Coho.

The Matson history book describes Coho salmon in the 1920-30s "ganging up" in the Greenwood Creek estuary (below a fish tadder that early Fish and Game officials had required in the L.E. White Co. log pond at the mouth of Greenwood Creek during that period). The Louisiana Pacific's Sustained Yield Plan (SYP 95-003, published 3/11/97), and the NMFS/Tiburon Lab report both indicate Coho salmon in Greenwood Creek in the 1996 period. (Also, fisherman Jesse Russell's declaration cites coho in Greenwood Creek in 1975). SYP 95-003 states the following:

"Coho salmon are known to reside in the streams of WWAA 84, where L-P [the previous owner] has established 6 fish distribution sampling sites (Map 8). The literature review conducted for the SYP yielded information indicating that coho populations are present within the Upper and Lower Greenwood Creek planning watersheds." (SYP 95-003, page 8, 40, WWAA 84—Greenwood Creek)

The L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys, however, found no coho in Greenwood Creek. The NMFS/Tiburon Lab record of Coho in Greenwood Creek in 1995 ref. #42 refers to unpublished L-P data. The relationship between this unpublished data and the L-P 1994-96 Fish Distribution surveys is unclear. The two L-P sources are contradictory as to Coho salmon in Greenwood Creek during the 1994-96 period.

In one logging plan (THP 1-99-339 MEN), the forester placed a letter in the record after the close of public comment in which he implied that the streams that the SYP was referring to, as having Coho, were not Greenwood Creek streams but rather some unrelated small streams in an area called "Cuffey's Point" that L-P added to WWAA 84 because it had no other place to put them in the SYP WWAA's. CDF approved THP 339 with this disinformation in it—despite public comment letters pointing out the forester's plainly wrong statement. Later, CDF repeated this mis-information in the O.R. for THP 1-00-357 MEN. "Cuffey's Point" is an area that drains to a 140 foot cliff over the ocean, and cannot have coho. (Attachment 31-38). Similarly, CDF denied the presence of steelhead in the THP 357 area, despite L-P fish survey data to the contrary.

The disinformation and misinformation about the salmonid fishery in Greenwood Creek, coming from CDF and plan submitter MRC, combines with the lack of regard for the impacts of logging on the Elk town water supply, and the lack of information about these impacts, for a total picture of serious and intentional neglect for these beneficial uses.

Forty percent of the L-P/MRC ownership in Greenwood Creek (about 9,800 acres of a 16,000 acre drainage) was entered and logged during the 1980-1990s. In the current era, MRC is entering and logging about 20% of its

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ownership over a three year period (1997-2000), a rate of logging that may mean 65% entry over the decade. According to the SYP, 22.3% of this watershed is rated "extreme erosion hazard" and 56.5% is rated as "high erosion hazard."

The story of Alder Creek, Mallo Pass Creek (a coho salmon creek that is being used for water drafting!), Brush Creek and Schooner Gulch, and the story of the north coast creeks, Cottaneva, Hardy, Juan, Howard, DeHaven and Wagers, and other small coastal watersheds, is much the same as the stories of Greenwood Creek and Elk Creek. It is past time for the beneficial uses in these watersheds to receive monitoring and protective standards, since it is very clear that neither CDF nor any timber company is going to protect the fish and water quality of these streams.

Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance
Greenwood Watershed Association
P.O. Box 90, Elk, CA 95432

5/15/01

Additional documents, attached to Redwood Coast Watersheds Alliance letter of 5/15/01

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